Trade with Saudi Arabia

†3007. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:
PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to enhance trade with Saudi Arabia;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the number of goods being exported from India to Saudi Arabia at present; and

(d) the amount of foreign exchange earned by India from this export during last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) To enhance bilateral trade with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which has Saudi Arabia as one of the member countries, it has been decided to have negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with GCC.

(c) At present 96 categories of commodities are exported from India to Saudi Arabia.

(d) Exports from India to Saudi Arabia were valued at US $ 940.74 million, US $ 1123.31 million and US $ 1369.76 million during the year 2002-2003, 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 respectively.

Escorting US ships by Indian naval vessels

3008. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that upon a request from Washington, Indian naval vessels have escorted US ships in Straits of Malacca in South-east Asia in recent time;

(b) the details of any pact or understanding between the navies of the two countries in this regard;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.